

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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" They divided the nation (of Ireland) into two distinct bodies, without common interest, sympathy, or connection. One of these bodies was to possess all the franchises, all the property, all the education: the other was to be composed of the drawers of water, and the cutters of turf for them. Are we to be astonished, when, by the efforts of so much violence in conquest, and so much policy in regulation, continued without intermission for near a hundred years, we had reduced them to a mob; that, whenever they came to act at all, many of them would act exactly like a mob, without temper, without measure, or foresight? Surely, it might be just now a matter of temperate discussion, whether you ought not to apply a remedy to the *real cause* of the evil."—BURKE, Vol. VI. p. 304.

225]

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.—(*Continued from page 208*)—I. *Sir Christopher Hawkins*. II. *Neutral Commerce*. III. *Slave Trade*. IV. *Hampshire Petition*.—1. In the House of Commons, on the 4th instant, "Mr. Atkins Wright, Chairman of the Penryn Election Committee, reported, that Sir Christopher Hawkins was not duly elected, and ought not to have been returned for the said Borough, and that Harry Swann, Esq. and John Trevanion, Esq. ought to have been returned; and that none of the petitions were frivolous nor vexatious. The Deputy Clerk of the Crown was ordered to attend the House to-morrow to amend the said returns. Mr. Wright made a special report from the Committee, that Sir C. Hawkins, by himself and his agents, was guilty of *bribery and corruption*, and that John Stona the elder, James Edgcombe, and the Reverend Robert Dillon were parties to the said bribery and corruption." This Sir C. Hawkins has been long famous; and, it is said, that, for many years last past, he has been labouring, in the same way that their lordships of Carrington and Rendlesham laboured, to obtain a *peerage*. What a pity, that the labours of so many years should be marred in a moment! I cannot say, that this discovery and the probable consequence of it, with respect to poor Sir Christopher, give me any pleasure. I think it, indeed, calculated to do harm, rather than good; because it may lead weak persons to conclude, that this "bribery and corruption" as they are *coarsely* called, are quite common at elections; that no small part of the "faithful Commons" procure themselves to be returned by such means; and, it may lead saucy inquirers to ask, how the members for Old Sarum, for St. Maws, or Newtown, or any other member of some three hundred of the boroughs are returned. So that, in

[226

fact, the principal effect of such discoveries is to furnish a handle to Jacobins and Levelers to carp at our invaluable constitution, to call aloud for reform in one way or another, and to compel the loyal subjects of his Majesty to take places and pensions, whereby to be enabled to defend our Gracious Sovereign and our Holy Religion against the attacks of the said Jacobins and Levellers. And, against this fearful evil, what is the good we obtain? Why, the mighty good, is, the seating of Harry Swann, whom the election men emphatically call, *Lawyer Swann*, instead of Sir Christopher Hawkins! I am really sorry to see any election petitions at all; and still more sorry to see them succeed; for, I am certain that such success tends to the keeping up of a most mischievous deception. The whole thing had better go on just as it is going. I do not like to see any interruption to its progress, at least in this petty way. We are all of us getting very fast into a correct opinion upon every matter relating to the organization of the House of Commons. *Events*, passed, passing, and coming on, are great teachers, and will not fail to make us all perceive the real source of our burthens and calamities. The day is not far distant, when it will be out of the power of Sir Christopher Hawkins, or any such man, to blind the eyes, or restrain the indignation of the injured and insulted people of England, who will not for ever be held in such terror as not to dare to speak the truth in plain terms.—II. *NEUTRAL COMMERCE*, as regulated by the last order in council, became the subject of a long debate in the House of Commons, on Wednesday, the 4th instant, in consequence of a motion, made by Mr. Perceval, for the laying of that order officially before the House, with a view, on his part, to shew, that it did not go far enough, and that the forbearance manifested in it towards neutrals, was unwise, and was, indeed, degrading to the country. The motion, after

several long speeches, was *not put to the vote*, and, that, too, while the mover insisted, that no sound argument against its production had been advanced; nor can I, for my part, see any other reason why the latter did not divide the House upon the question, except that he was conscious, that he should be left in a minority so small as to render his party ridiculous amongst those, who have no other way of estimating the merits of a question, than that of counting the noses of the voters.—As to the propriety of issuing such an order of council, that question must be determined upon principles of policy, none of which principles appeared, from the report of the debate, to be at all comprehensible to Mr. Perceval, who seemed to have lost sight of every thing but *revenge*; instant revenge, by all the means in our power; instant injury to the enemy, without the least consideration as to the consequences with regard to ourselves. This was happily enough illustrated by Lord Howick in his comparison of the man and the monkey; but, his lordship, in the conclusion of his speech, had recourse again, if the report speak truth, to one of the old Pitt arguments for silencing his opponents, an argument totally unworthy of any man of an upright mind. This was it.—Ministers have issued the order in council, to find fault with the order in council, or to call for it with a view to censure it, is to find fault with ministers, or at least, to express a doubt of their wisdom or integrity; if you entertain a doubt of this wisdom or integrity, you must entertain a doubt, whether they be fit to fill their present situation; and, therefore, instead of this motion, instead of attacking them thus, by a side wind, you should move, at once, for an address to the king, praying him to turn out the ministers. This argument is a sweeper. It applies to all times and all circumstances. It was the argument with which Pitt a thousand times silenced the voice of his opponents. If there had been a *really* independent member in the House, who would have said, “with all my heart: I will move such an address; but, my Lord, let us first agree, that, before we divide, every placeman and pensioner shall withdraw.” If there had been such a man, so to speak, my Lord Howick would not have had much of a triumph.—

III. The bill for **ABOLISHING THE SLAVE TRADE** passed, in the House of Lords, or, at least, its passing was decided on, on Thursday the 5th instant, by a majority of 136 against 90. So successful is the cause of “humanity” when the ministers choose

to take it up!—For my part, I think, that this law will produce great and various mischief, and very little good of any sort. I am convinced, that the Slave Trade, by removing some of the Africans to the islands of America, bettered their condition. That they were better off in America than in Africa; and, of course, that there was no inhumanity in the Trade itself, generally speaking. But, it is now quite useless to give opinions upon the subject; and all that remains for us to do, is, to express our hope, that the principles, upon which this act has been framed, with regard to the Blacks, may not be forgotten, when men are treating of matters relating to the Whites of foreign countries, who are not, at any rate, less worthy of the cares of humanity, on account of the colour of their skin. In the newspaper report of the debate, upon this occasion, Lord Grenville is stated to have said, that, having shewn to a *British House of Peers* that humanity was wounded by the Slave Trade, he was sure he might safely rely upon *their* decision against it; forgetting, probably, that all that he attempted to shew, had been shewn to a British House of Peers twenty years ago, and at many periods subsequent to that time. But, his Lordship is reported further to have said, in the form of a question: “What right do we derive from any human institution, or any divine ordinance, to deprive the nations of Africa, by force, of the means of *labouring for their own advantage*, and to compel them to labour for *our profit*?” As no one answered this question, my Lord, I will; and, my answer is this: that the human institution, from which the slave-dealer and planter derive this right, is of exactly the same sort, as that, whence your Lordship derives your right to be, at one and the same time, First Lord of the Treasury and Auditor of the Exchequer; of exactly the same sort, as that, whence your Lordship derives your right to receive the salary of the former as well as of the latter office, while, as to the former, you are even exempted from the labour of putting your name to the Exchequer Bills; and that is, my Lord, *the law*; acts of parliament, of which there are many to sanction the Slave-Trade, and, in consequence of which acts, thousands of British subjects have deposited their fortunes in West-India property. As to any divine ordinance, sanctioning this trade, there is none, that I know of, which can be adduced, except by implication; nor is it very extraordinary, I presume, that, in the history of the Children of Israel, we should not be able to find any special provision for the govern-

ment of the West-India Islands ; but, my Lord, while I acknowledge, that there is no divine ordinance directly and specially sanctioning this traffic ; while I admit this fact, I must reject the inference ; for, I might, and I would were it not for the dread of being thought " coarse," defy the ingenuity and profundity of your Lordship, to discover, or to deduce, even after the manner of Lord Peter in the Tale of a Tub, an authority, from Holy Writ, for the holding of the two offices above-mentioned.—To the latter part of your Lordship's question I have no answer ; for, I am decidedly of opinion, that, whether men are of black or white skin, it is abominably wicked to deprive the many of the means of labouring *for their own advantage*, and to compel them *to labour for the profit of the few*. And, my Lord, such is my way of thinking upon this subject, that the oppression is, in my estimation, precisely the same in point of guilt, whether the oppressed party go by the name of pauper, or that of slave. I attach, my Lord, very little importance to mere words ; and to me, it signifies little by what name or title the execrable oppressor be known. Nor, my Lord, am I to be at all amused with the talk of freedom, heard from the mouths of some foreign tyrants, as the devil is said to quote scripture more glibly than a field-preacher ; I look at the man and his condition ; and, if I find, that he labours solely for the profit of others ; that the fruit of his labour is drawn away, whether by a visible or invisible hand ; that, from the very nature of the state of things, it is impossible, generally speaking, that he should ever possess any thing worthy of the name of property ; that he has nothing upon the face of the earth but his miseries that he can call his own ; that his dress is rags ; that his food is barely sufficient to preserve life ; that he dares not open his lips, lest his words should give pain to the pride of his oppressors ; that for him to speak truth is an offence that exposes him to severe bodily punishment ; that, in short, he is suffered to exist, even in this state of misery, for the sole purpose of enabling his oppressors to wallow in luxury, to revel in debauchery, to set at defiance all laws, whether human or divine : if I find this to be his state, my Lord, whatever be the place of his abode or the colour of his skin, by whatever name, whether of lash, staff, or bayonet, the instrument be called that keeps him in subjection, and by whatever appellation his oppressors may choose to distinguish themselves, still I call him a *slave* ; and still I wish and still I pray for his deliverance from their greedy and

merciless grasp.—There is another proposition, too, in which I have the good fortune to concur most heartily with your Lordship, who is reported to have said, that, as men became free, they would feel an interest in the defence of their country ; that they would feel grateful towards the government, and loyal towards the king. Nothing can be more consonant to reason, especially if the men, thus becoming free, *are capable of distinguishing between freedom and slavery* ; for, as your lordship very wisely inferred, it is preposterous, to the last degree, to suppose, that slaves, answering to the portrait above drawn, should feel any interest at all in the fate of the soil, which they are compelled to cultivate for the sole benefit of others ; and, that they should, for the preservation of a state of things, in which they feel such grievous oppressions, voluntarily risk that life, which is all they have to preserve. The oppressors of such a people, no matter by what titles designated, have, though excessively stupid, sometimes, in all other respects, generally been too cunning to suppose, that their slaves would not gladly embrace *any change* that might offer itself, from whatever quarter proceeding, well knowing, that no change could possibly be for the worse. Hence it is, that, as in the case of the old government of France, they have, while they made much talk of the bravery and loyalty of their people, upon whose fidelity and love they affected to place implicit reliance, taken care to have a strong body of foreign troops in the heart of their country. Yet, as in the instance I have referred to, this precaution has, in the end, always proved useless ; and has indeed, only served to hasten the downfall of the profligate oppressors. So that, I, upon this point, agree with you most cordially, my Lord, that for a country to have a secure defence against a powerful enemy, the great mass of the people must *feel* that the state of things is worth preserving ; and, that, in short, for a people to venture their lives, or to make any voluntary sacrifices at all, in defence of their country, they must be well convinced, that a change of masters would make their state worse than it now is.—

IV. THE HAMPSHIRE PETITION is, at last, before the House of Commons, it having been presented, on the 6th instant by Mr. Ashton Smith. The nature of this petition has been before described. It complains of undue influence having been made use of, by persons in office, in order to procure the return of Messrs. Thistlethwaite and Herbert ; and, though the ministers, well backed as they are, appear to have put a bold face

upon the matter, they did seem to be somewhat sore. The petition on the motion of Mr. Smith was to be taken into consideration on the 13th; and the matter will, probably, have been disposed of before this sheet reaches the public eye. It is not difficult to foretell the result, as far as the proceedings of the House will go; but the discussion will do good. It will convey to the people, in the form of parliamentary debates, facts, which, though every well-informed man in Hampshire is acquainted with them, no man in the kingdom would dare to state, in print, as coming from himself. We shall have one more little exposure; and though we have had a great many already, another cannot possibly do any harm, and it may do some good. The circumstance of Mr. Rose's name being amongst those of the petitioners against ministers for using undue influence, has excited some surprise; and, I think, not without reason. Had he, indeed, himself ever been, when he was in Mr. Freemantle's situation, in the habit of being the agent of undue influence, one might have accounted for his now coming forward, upon the philosophy of the maxim, than an old poacher makes the best of game-keepers; but as all the world knows, how scrupulous he was upon all such points; how rigidly he adhered to those pure principles of his great patron, which procured for the said patron the surname of *heaven-born*, one really is at some little loss to guess at the cause of his having been selected as a leader in an enterprize of this sort. The fact is, I believe, that he has not been selected; but has stepped forth of his own free will, being thereunto moved by the mortification, which he must have naturally felt, at seeing his principality of Hampshire, where I had, for some eighteen months, the honour to be numbered amongst his subjects, pass for ever from under his paternal sway. — Whatever may have been the cause of this petition, as far as the motives of the petitioners are concerned, that the petition is a proper one, no impartial person will, I should think, attempt to deny; and, in Hampshire, at least, it is well known, that there are many independent and worthy men amongst the petitioners. — As to the unsuccessful candidates, of Mr. Chute's conduct I shall speak fully, when occasion shall serve, to the freeholders of Hampshire; but, to Sir Henry Mildmay the country is, unquestionably, much indebted. His conduct, from the beginning to the end was frank and honourable; and, it was to him that the county was indebted for the election itself.

CONTINENTAL WAR.—It was my in-

tention to have given, in this sheet, extracts from the daily newspapers, shewing the progress of the belligerent lie, with which the senseless metropolis was amused and agitated during the eight days that ended on the 1st of this month; but, though I am still of opinion that it would be useful to put these samples of news-paper veracity and wisdom upon record, I have not the room, without excluding the excellent Letter upon the State of Ireland, to which my motto applies, and which, when it has been read, I am sure all my correspondents, whose productions are kept back, will readily excuse the delay. — I cannot, however, refrain from stating the substance of this long-lived and hard-dying lie. — When I was a boy, we used, in order to draw off the harriers from the trail of a hare that we had set down as our own private property, get to her haunt early in the morning, and drag a red-herring, tied to a string, four or five miles over hedges and ditches, across fields and through coppices, till we got to a point, whence we were pretty sure the hunters would not return to the spot where they had thrown off; and, though I would, by no means, be understood, as comparing the editors and proprietors of the London daily press to animals half so sagacious and so faithful as hounds, I cannot help thinking, that, in the case to which we are referring, they must have been misled, at first, by some political deceiver. It was on Saturday, the 24th of January, that the Morning Chronicle, the leader of the pack, came, all at once, athwart the drag. Scarcely had his well-known voice reached the ears of his wide-ranging brethren, when they, knowing him to be, of late, held in high esteem by the huntsman at Whitehall, joined in the jovial cry, while, from Downing-street to St. James's and from St. James's to the 'Change, there burst forth one universal hark-forward, and every fool you met shook you by the hand, and laughingly told you, that the French had been defeated by the Russians with the loss of 40,000 men, all their baggage and artillery, with ten generals made prisoners, and Buonaparté mortally wounded. In this way the chace continued until the next day about noon, when the French Bulletins, down to the 48th in number, and in date so low as the 3d of January, three days later than the date of the battles, arrived; and, as they spoke of no battle, after that of the 26th of December, which the newspapers had acknowledged was in favour of the French, the pack seemed rather to slacken in the pursuit. What they wanted in pace, however, they amply made up for in tongue, and having, by Monday

morning, had time to turn their wind, the cry was revived, and, though in tones somewhat less expressive of eagerness, it was, I think, rather louder than before. On Tuesday, however, the scent evidently began to grow cold. Part of the pack gave tongue only here and there upon a favourable spot; and the Morning Chronicle, who had led off in such stile on the first day, began to run mute, and were it not for the fear of being thought *coarse*, I would say, that he seemed to keep up with the pack only from dread of the Whipper-in; and, on Wednesday, though the puppies still kept on with as much glee and noise as ever, he not only ran mute, but turned short about, and in spite of the terrors of the whip, began to hunt heel. But, on Thursday, after a tedious fault, and when only now-and-then a disregarded yelp was to be heard, the whole pack, as if their mouths had been opened by one and the same wire, set up a full and most melodious cry, upon the arrival of sundry letters from various ports in the Baltic, Holland, France, and elsewhere, all perfectly concurring in the important facts, that the French had been defeated, with the loss of 80,000 men, 80 pieces of artillery, and that they were retreating through the Prussian states with the utmost precipitation, greatly dreading the Austrians, who, under the Archduke Charles, were pushing on to cut off their retreat, “thus exhibiting to” “insulted Europe the reverses and the speedily approaching fall of the scourge of the” “human race;” insomuch, that, on Friday, “Notwithstanding the solemnity of the” “the day, it being the anniversary of the” “death of the *blessed Martyr*” (I quote nearly word for word) “the Change was” “as much crowded as if it had not been a” “holyday; and people seemed absolutely” “beside themselves with joy, the news of” “the defeat of the French coming together” “with the promulgation of the Finance” “Plan appearing to have overpowered the” “feelings of a grateful and loyal people.” Alas! it was a mere transitory effect of the political red-herring; for, on the Saturday, the scent became as cold as a stone; and, on the Monday, the Morning Chronicle solemnly assured its readers, that the little bulletin, which it had published itself under the name of Lord Howick, never had been promulgated by, or received the sanction of, his Majesty’s Ministers! Some miserable attempts have been made, and are yet making, to ward off the charge of wilful falsehood, or of unparalleled folly, so justly alleged against the daily newspapers; but, the whole of their statements upon this subject, without the least exception, are now

fully proved to have been false; and, to one or the other of the charges they must plead guilty. And yet it is to this press; to the at once silly and venal wretches that conduct and that own this press, that we are to look for facts and opinions! Is it any wonder, that, under such teachers, the nation is kept in such profound ignorance as to its situation and its interests? If a thousand of the most crafty villains that the world ever beheld, had been shut up for one half of their lives to devise the means of keeping a nation in darkness, at the same time that it should think itself the most enlightened in the world, it is impossible that they should have discovered any thing more effectual for the purpose, than the London daily press, aided by the more solemn hirelings of the Magazines and Reviews.—As to the real situation of the armies, it is not, perhaps, easy to come at an account of it. From every thing that I have seen, however, I am of opinion, that the Russian Emperor does not feel very confident, that a French army will not be seen at St. Petersburg, during the next summer. His proclamation for a levy of irregular troops; his talk about *defending* the empire; his appeal to the *patriotism* of his people; all seem to argue, that he is greatly afraid the war will reach his own frontier.—The Russian account of “*the victory*,” as it is called, clearly shews, that the French were victorious on the 26th of December.

“*DELICATE INVESTIGATION.*”—So! all’s well again! I have too great an affection for the liberty of person, as well as liberty of the press, to speak of the conduct of any body, as connected with this subject, except the editor of the Morning Post; but, of *his* conduct I will speak; and all the world shall never hush up the subject, as long as I am able to publish this work; for, I will take care to keep it alive by observations made once a quarter, or so; and, upon the anniversary of the day, when Sir John Douglas and his Lady were publicly threatened with death for having given certain evidence, I will repeat in substance, all the Morning Post has published upon the investigation, “*the delicate investigation!*” Not a word do we now hear against Sir John and Lady Douglas. It would seem that we were in a dream, when we heard those dreadful denunciations against the witnesses, who, as we were told, had been *suborned* to give evidence in this case. All is now innocence! and, really, one would suppose, that no investigation at all, of any sort, had ever taken place. All that we now hear, is, “that her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales is to attend the next Drawing Room, by the

express desire of his Majesty." And, *why not* attend it? Why not? Why wait for the express desire of the king? What does the Morning Post mean to insinuate by a notification of this kind? *When*, indeed, the next Drawing Room is to be held, the Morning Post has not thought proper to inform us; and, as a profound philosopher like him knows very well, many things may happen before the next Drawing Room is held.—This much for the present. Next week the subject shall be revived.

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT'S DINNER.—On the 5th instant, a dinner was given to Sir Francis Burdett at the Crown and Anchor Rooms, to which 1500 people sat down. A dinner, some would say, has nothing to do with politics; but, this dinner has much to do with politics; and, the next time the editors of the bribed press are talking about the insignificance of Sir F. Burdett, I would beg of them to name any other man now in this kingdom, or that has, of late years, lived in this kingdom, who could find 1500 people voluntarily to give half a guinea each for the sake of dining with him. During the last election these hirelings affected to regard him as a simpleton, led, like a child, by others, and having, within himself, no resources, either of talent or of influence. Now, they call him the *Grand Lama*, exhibited, once in a while, for the purpose of keeping his party alive. Never mind: whether called "Lama" or "Goose," if he keep steadily onward, invariably acting upon the principles which he inculcated from the hustings at Brentford, he will see his enemies and the enemies of his country completely under his feet.—His speech, at this dinner, like all his other speeches, was excellent; though, as to the *Finance Plan*, he would seem, from the report of his speech, not to entertain exactly the same sentiments with me. That he is perfectly right as to its ultimate *intended* effect, I agree; but, I think, he is mistaken as to what will be its *real* effect in that respect; and, I am persuaded, that, when he has taken time to reflect, he will find reason to agree with me, that, never, as long as he shall live, will any minister, however bold and however backed, *attempt to impose a new tax*. What the plan will *finally* produce must be a matter of speculation. But, the stop put to taxation is a good without alloy. The tyranny of the taxing system cannot be increased; and the faster its corruptions increase, the sooner will they come to an end.—The perpetuating of the war-taxes is nothing, in my opinion, against the plan; for, as I always said, so I always believed, that *none* of those taxes would ever have

been repealed, unless, indeed, we could have supposed it likely for Napoleon to be overthrown. That new taxes were talked of in the king's speech I know; and, I shall, upon a future occasion, mark the inconsistency; that, at the beginning of the war, a promise was made to take off all the war taxes at peace, I know very well; and, I am aware, that the present splendid boast may be merely the forerunner of some enormous grant out of the public money. But, *there are to be no new taxes for three years to come*. We are explicitly told, that new taxes are not necessary. And to this promise and this declaration we will hold the ministers. In a word, the plan will, in my opinion, hasten the great and happy event, which I have been so long praying for; and for this, as well as for the stopping of the progress of taxation, I heartily thank the ministers.—The charges of Sir Francis against the present ministers, of having broken their faith with the people, are all undeniably true; and, if there be any fault in his censure, upon this score, it is that of too much mildness; for, in speaking of their apostacy, it is impossible to be too severe.—The *toast* has been a subject of carping with the hired press; but it is the toast given by the Duke of Norfolk, now Lord Lieutenant of the county of Sussex, who is also now again of the king's privy council.—The omission to drink the health of the king was a mere matter of *taste*. The company did not choose to do it; and, they seemed to be guilty of hypocrisy. The king's health is full as good as if it had been drunk at the Crown and Anchor; nor is it any better for being regularly given at every dinner of place-men, pensioners, tax gatherers, and hired writers. It may be given, or not, as the feelings of the parties may dictate; but to make it a rule to give it, whatever may be the sentiments of the company, is the most effectual way of rendering it contemptible.

ORDNANCE OFFICE.—In my next I propose to publish a letter, which I have received, in answer to a former correspondent, who recommended the abolishing of the Master-Generalship of the Ordnance, and the placing of that department under the Duke of York; but, in the meanwhile, I cannot help just observing, that I confidently hope, I shall be regarded as the very last man in the kingdom to back such a recommendation.

"LEARNED LANGUAGES."—I have received large packets upon this subject. My correspondent, who called himself "a late member of Queen's College, Oxford," and who dated his letter from the Temple, now

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tells me, that he is so far satisfied with my explanation; that the difference between us is now so small, as to induce him to *decline taking any part in the contest*. But, I beg leave to inform him, that he has again misunderstood me; and that, by the words "*general education*," I do not mean, as he would appear to suppose, "*the education of mankind in general*;" but, the education of gentlemen in general, and of persons of the learned professions in general. I must not, if I can help it, suffer this late member of Queen's College to withdraw from the contest; and, therefore, I will restate my propositions, and endeavour so to express myself as to leave no ground for excuse, on the score of misapprehension.

1. *That the Latin and Greek languages are improperly called the LEARNED languages.*

2. *That the teaching of those languages to persons who are to become statesmen, legislators, lawyers, physicians, or priests, is worse than useless.* To misunderstood my meaning now would, I think, require a head to have been at least 20 years in stuffing with words; and, therefore, if that of the late member of Queen's College does really contain any ideas, let me hope, that this re-statement of my propositions will draw them forth.

SIR JOHN ANSTRUTHER.—In page 177, I stated, upon authority which I thought good, some facts respecting this gentleman; but, from the letter, which will be found below, it appears, that this information was not good, the facts being, almost the whole of them, grossly incorrect, and, some of them totally unfounded, proceeding from nothing better than mere rumour. Here, however, we have an instance of the harmlessness, and even of the benefit of the press, as long as it is perfectly free from corruption. The facts were not true, and many persons will have imbibed, from them, a false opinion of Sir J. Anstruther; but, the same channel being open to the contradiction, all the inconvenience which the statement produces to the misrepresented party, is, the trouble of making that contradiction; and, for this trouble he is amply paid by the opportunity, which the occasion affords him of doing away, in the most effectual manner, even the rumours which were afloat against him.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A MR. JOHN BONE, who dates his letters from the "*Office of Tranquillity*," having made a public complaint against me, in the Courier newspaper, for not having inserted a letter of his, sent me for publication, and for not having answered an application from him for the return of the said letter, I beg

leave to remind my correspondents, and my readers in general, of the notifications which I gave, long ago, to correspondents, and which were as follow: 1. That I always read, as soon as possible, and with as much attention as I was master of, every communication with which I was favoured. 2. That I never did in my life, and that I never would, charge, or accept of, any thing for the insertion of any communication. 3. That, while I by no means pretended to set myself up as a critic, I must of necessity exercise my judgment, with respect to the time of insertion, and also with respect to the merits and utility of the performance. 4. That every paper transmitted to me for insertion in the Register, must be regarded as my own property from the moment it was received. And, 5. That it was impossible for me to answer the letters of correspondents; and, that no answer would, in future, be given—I expressed my hope, that no arrogance would be ascribed to me in laying down these rules; I shewed, I think clearly, that an observance of them was absolutely necessary; and, that my reasons were generally thought good, may be inferred from the fact, that, since they were given, the only subject of regret with me, as to this department of my work, has been, that I have, for want of room, been so frequently compelled to defer the insertion of valuable productions.—Such being, then, the conditions, upon which I received the letter of Mr. John Bone, I may safely leave the public to judge of the justice of his complaint. But, notwithstanding such conditions, I should have answered his private letter, in which he requested his public paper to be returned, had not that letter appeared to me to savour more of a command than of a request.—I have read his paper, and whatever my opinion may be of its merits, the subject it treats of being of vast importance, it shall be inserted; but, as to the time when, that must be left for me to judge of. The subject is, the *Poor-Laws*; and, it will, I think, appear to be one, which though of fearful magnitude, can very well admit of delay in the discussion. It is true, that I inserted a letter, on the other side, early in October; but, of late, there has not been room for so long a letter as Mr. Bone's without excluding matter of more immediate interest.

SIR JOHN ANSTRUTHER.

SIR,—In 20 lines of your last Register (page 177), you have, I hope unintentionally, inserted 8 gross errors in fact, with regard to the gentleman, who, with a flippant affectation, ill suited to a man of sense and

of talent, which I esteem you to be, you denominate a *Sir J. Anstruther*.—You have stated his salary “as C. Justice of India” to have been “£7,000 a year;” a reference to the charter of the supreme court at Calcutta (I believe the 13th Geo. 3d), will shew you that in this first assertion you were mistaken or misinformed.—You have said, that after a residence of 7 years in Calcutta, he has “upon his retirement a pension of “£3,000 from the Company:” in the first place, his pension is not near so much, and, in the next, though it is paid out of the Indian revenues, he does not derive it from the Company, nor hold it at their pleasure, but under an Act of the legislature, 37 Geo. 3d. The Company can neither grant nor withhold the Judges’ pensions.—You have asserted, that Sir J. A. has “lately been appointed *Judge* of the causes that come before the Privy Council;” he certainly has been sworn a Privy Counsellor, and therefore, *ex vi termini*, may be called a *Judge* of the causes coming before that tribunal; but he has *not* been appointed a *Judge*, any more, or otherwise, than any Privy Counsellor who has been sworn these 20 years; if he had, or could have been so appointed, I think much public benefit would have been derived from his legal knowledge, but more particularly, from his intimate acquaintance with the subjects of colonial litigation; hearing appeals from colonial courts forming no inconsiderable part of the business of the Privy Council.—You also say, that to this “office, a salary of £1,500 a year “is affixed;” now I assure you, and a little enquiry will convince you of the fact, that he does not receive *one shilling* for his attendance or aid at the Privy Council; and that by the 6th of Anne, neither he, nor any other Privy Counsellor sitting as he does in Parliament, could receive any remuneration for such newly created office, had it in fact been created. On this subject I have only to notice another mistake, arising out of the last; if he does not receive *any* salary or remuneration, what you have heard, and now assert, about the place being made a *patent* one, and that we shall have to pay his salary for life, must be as unfounded as every other part of the statement.—This profound ignorance of all the facts already noticed, may account for your calling the gentleman to whom they relate, a *Sir J. Anstruther*, as if he were a *new* and totally unknown man to his country as well as to you. The truth is, that Sir J. A. so long since as the commencement of Hastings’s trial, now near 20 years ago, was of sufficient eminence (a fact that seems to be known to you) in the House of

Commons, to have been selected as a manager of the prosecution with Messrs. Fox, Burke, &c. &c.; and prior to his going to India as Chief Justice, he held such a rank in his profession here, as to have been on the Bench, and to have been Attorney or Solicitor General to the Prince of Wales, and Counsel to the Board of Control.—In 1798, he arrived in India as Chief Justice, selected and sent out under the 37th Geo. 3d., expressly for the purpose of retrenching the expences of the law generally, and of abolishing such offices under the Court as he might deem unnecessary. How he executed these delicate and difficult tasks, let those who have been in India, and who are best acquainted with the subject, declare; I do not profess to be a judge. The result of his mission is well and generally known; he diminished the expense of the the Supreme Court to the India Company above one-third; and the expenses of suitors full one-half; and, after a residence exceeding the time required by the Act 37 Geo. 3d, returning from the exercise of a very laborious duty, in a climate peculiarly hostile to life, his sovereign has granted him that reward, which, under an act of the legislature, he was authorized to bestow; and which, I think it cannot be denied, Sir J. A. has fully and fairly merited.—If he has taken, or intends to take, a zealous part in the defence of Marquis Wellesley, the fact is truly and equally honourable to both. He held the 2d rank in the country which Lord W. governed, and during the whole of his lordship’s administration; having had no share in the government, he is in no possible respect implicated in any of its measures. The office which he filled, put it out of Lord Wellesley’s power to injure or to serve him; and, while his talents, acquirements, and professional accuteness, rendered him an able, accurate, and discriminating judge of the nature and tendency of every public measure, his principles put him above the influence, and his rank and situation placed him far beyond the power, of any man to tempt or to intimidate.—He is thus, most truly, a *witness omni exceptione major*; and I shall rejoice, (because I highly respect them both) if the fact be so, that he has come forward in support of Lord Wellesley; for if he who had the best opportunities of knowing what Lord W. had to do and did, should approve of his public conduct, it must be honourable to his lordship, that so competent, as well as so unbiassed a judge of that conduct, should be, as you style him, “extremely zealous in his cause.”

ASIATICUS.

MR. PERCEVAL.—IRELAND.

SIR,—I observe, by the Political Register of the 27th of December, that a report has been published in the newspapers, which supposes some notice to have been taken, in a place called the House of Commons in England, of the *Affairs of Ireland*, where we have no such place as a House of Commons. I do not know the persons whose names the publisher of the report has thought proper to make use of. One of them he has called Petty, and the other Perceval. In looking into the list of placemen, I find a person of the name of Perceval, who is so circumstanced as to hold an office called *Surveyor of the Meltings and Clerk of the Irons* in the Mint, at a salary of £132. 10s. per annum. This person, I find, in another book, is the brother of a person called Lord Arden, who holds the place of Registrar of the Court of Admiralty, the net receipt of which was by the Committee of Finance taken at an average of £10,340 2s. 5d. per annum; and who also holds the place of Registrar of the Court of Appeal of prizes, worth, in the same way £1024. 2. 8. per annum; and also, that of Registrar of the Court of Delegates, worth £9. 18. 2. per annum. The same Lord Arden is also a Lord of the bed-chamber, at £1000 per annum. I find also, in another book, that this Mr. Perceval, is brother in law to a Lord Redesdale, who was born somewhere in the North of England (as I conjecture from having once heard him speak) who has a pension of £4000 per annum on the Irish establishment: Making altogether a *family* provision of £16,506. 3. 3. per annum out of the public funds; but for what services, the books into which I have looked are, I confess, negligently silent. I further find, that these personages are the sons or sons in law of a Lord Egmont. Of this Lord Egmont I have not been able to discover any personal memorial, except in one instance. The late Lord Orford in a letter to General Conway* gives an account of the Speakers in the House of Commons in the famous debate on the German treaties. "Lord Egmont," he says "was doubling, absurd, and obscure." This is the whole history of Lord Egmont. The person who publishes Speeches in the name of Mr. Perceval, is, I suppose, well acquainted with this picture of Lord Egmont; as I find he has in these modern speeches, adhered, with a miniature accuracy, to every line of the *family features* marked in the sketch given by Lord Orford.—The reason of my mentioning these circumstances of the Perceval family is, that the

offer made by the speech maker above mentioned, and the words of which have been quoted in the Political Register of the 27th of December, may not be entirely thrown away. The offer is of "an extraordinary exertion of the law," and of "an enlargement of the executive power." As such measures may not entirely accord with Ireland, my proposal is, that a parliamentary inquiry shall be set on foot, to ascertain upon what merits, or what claim of merits, either personal or hereditary, this family, of whom a *Clerk of the Irons* appears to be the most conspicuous, have possessed themselves of an income of £16,505. 3. 3. per annum, out of the public money. If such an inquiry should be set on foot, I hope no man in or out of parliament will "withhold his assent" to any "extraordinary exertion of the law" or any "enlargement of the executive power" which may be necessary, in the pursuit of so laudable an object.—So much for the Percevals, and now for Ireland. It is certain, that while you have had a contest at Westminster we have had a *dispute* in Ireland. You will be so good as to observe, that what in England would be called an insurrection or rebellion, has been in Ireland ever since the battle of Thomas Street was fought within the hearing of the Earl of Hardwicke, been called a *dispute*; and I think it but a proper attention to national dignity, always to write in the vernacular idiom of my country. Let such transactions however be denominated by what terms they may, insurrection, rebellion or *dispute*, he who attempts to judge of them, should always endeavour to ascertain, whether there be any difference between their *legal* and their *moral* guilt. What facts amount in law to rebellion, and what is the mode of proof, are in general as easily ascertained, as the punishment is in general steadily inflicted. But the moralist, and in the moralist I include the wise politician, has in such an investigation, a question of a much more complex nature to determine; insomuch, that many persons who have been, by history, and the grateful feelings of mankind, immortalized as the virtuous preservers of their country, would without scruple, have been by the laws and the lawyers of their time, involved in the guilt, and condemned to the punishment of treason. So different indeed have been the opinion of lawyers from the rest of mankind on *moral* subjects, that the duty which is directly enjoined by the word, and enforced by the example of God, and the practice of which forms the scourge of the bad, and the glory of the good man in this life—*telling truth*—is by the lawyers fre-

* Lord Orford's Works, Vol. v p. 41.

quently numbered in the class of *high crimes*, and with a practical mercy consonant to their theoretical justice, consigned to the operation of the whip and the knife, the pillory and the prison. The interests of humanity therefore in such cases obviously require that some attention should be paid by other persons than Westminster barristers, to the degree of *moral turpitude* by which the unhappy objects of *legal vengeance* may be stained, before the judge and the executioner be called on, to close that account, on which no writ of error can thereafter operate. It is with a view of forerunning by some such inquiry those "*extraordinary exertions of the law*" which seem to be sought for with a sort of *habitual* avidity by the writer of the speech who has chosen the *Clerk of the Irons* as the chorus of his drama, that I now address you. It has been reported that one Lord Henry Petty thinks "*that nothing should be said on the state of Ireland*," and that the scenes which have been acted by thousands, and seen or heard of by millions, should be kept a *state secret*. His Lordship no doubt must be some person of profound gravity and extensive experience. With the utmost reverence for such a character, the reported opinion of his Lordship seems to savour rather too much of that of my uncle Toby, when he observed, "*it were better to wipe it up and say nothing about the matter.*" It must be admitted however, that the sagacious observation of my Uncle Toby, was applied to the foolish and vain display of the *disgusting precocity of an infant*, and not to a tremendous crisis in the affairs of an irritated kingdom. Notwithstanding the weight of an opinion propounded under the sanction of his lordship's name, I must consider a conduct directly the reverse of that insisted on by his lordship's gravity, to be a positive duty. From the peculiarity of the expressions published, and from the press where they first appeared, I am the more anxious to inculcate a sense of this duty, because it has been considered by some persons, as if Ireland among many other causes of discontent, had already been made a subject of some "*extraordinary exertions of the law*"—as if those "*extraordinary exertions*" had under colour of general phrases having apparently but prospective objects been made to "*yerk out their armed heels*" at transactions passed before those "*extraordinary exertions of the law*" were thought of or framed—as if such "*extraordinary exertions*" had been devised colourably for general purposes, but actually for partial and personal gratifications:—and as if having been so obtained, their powers had

been afterwards applied, as the irritability of mortified vanity, or the vengeance of detected profligacy had suggested. No doubt such insinuations may be ill founded, nay totally false. But it is for that very reason that an open inquiry into the causes of the discontents in Ireland, would be generally of advantage, and particularly consoling to the present government: though I so far agree with the publisher of the speech in the name of Lord Henry Petty, that I would not found such an inquiry upon the liberal policy of a Westminster barrister, nor suffer it to be hammered out by the author of speeches made for a Clerk of the Irons. In truth the author of these last mentioned speeches seems to have formed them for the purpose of inducing the public to believe, that the person whose name he has thought proper to sport with, was a sort of empiric of the cast we have read of in *Gil Blas*, under the name of Doctor Sangrado; for he has introduced his supposed speaker, as a sort of quack, aspiring to the cure of a diseased kingdom; and conceiving the summit of his art to consist in the operation of perpetual *bleeding* and keeping his patient continually in *hot water*. Perhaps any thing more "*absurd*" can scarcely be conceived, (though there is certainly nothing "*doubtful*" or "*obscure*" in it) than this continual recurrence to physical force, to remedy a moral distemper in a whole people. Nor is it difficult to foresee, that if the bayonet shall become the pen of the legislator, the laws will be written in the blood of the subject. For the purpose of putting an end, if possible, to such shallow and unfeeling experiments, by laying a ground for some sober and enlarged *enquiry* on so serious a subject, I send you such accounts as I have been able to collect of the *dispute* subsisting in Ireland and the causes of it.—The *dispute* has broken out principally in the Western Counties, though various symptoms of the same spirit have manifested themselves in some of the Northern and in some of the Southern Counties, and within these few days past in the Eastern County of Kildare at so short a distance as 14 miles from Dublin. In this *dispute*, large bodies of men have appeared arrayed and in force. They have marched into different districts, and have exacted provisions, money and arms. They have assumed the fantastical name of *Threshers*. Oaths have been administered by them, generally to bind the parties to the refusal of the payment of tithes to any but *resident* clergy; to regulate the dues payable to their own priests; to which sometimes has been added a clause not to obey the Act of Union, and also a sweeping clause to obey the orders

of *Captain Thresher*. Proclamations have been posted up (particularly and lately in the County of Kildare) addressed "*to the steady friends of liberty*" It would be improper for me to state any more of the matter of these proclamations, because they contain invitations of too strong a nature, and assertions with regard to *foreign force* which ought not to appear but through proper authority. As to the act of administering an oath in this way, whatever be the contents, the illegality and immorality of it are obvious. But abstracted from the consideration of administering an oath, there does not seem any thing very dangerous in the desires expressed by the two first clauses. The desire of a Roman Catholic body that the Protestant clergymen should *reside* among them does not seem to arise from any illiberal or any unkind dispositions. The desire to regulate the dues payable to their own priests, as it is a matter of sectarian regulation amongst themselves, does not seem to have in its principle any thing offensive to the public peace. The two subsequent clauses of the oath are of a very different tendency. The clause relating to the Act of Union is the more dangerous because the *disputants* insist that they framed that clause under *authority*. They quote a book entitled "A Report of the Debates in the House of Commons of Ireland on the 22d of January, 1799 on the Union: printed for James Moore in College-green, Dublin." In p. 49 of that work they insist they can shew a law opinion in their favour and of very great *authority*. Whether such an opinion exist or not I cannot determine, never having seen the book. But if such an opinion exist, it seems most strange that it should be arrayed in the garb of *authority*, and is certainly a matter worth inquiring into. With respect to the last clause of the oath, it is also dangerous. The exaction of obedience to then unknown orders, and to an unknown and probably a feigned person, must be productive of mischief amongst an uncultivated superstitious and enthusiastic people. These seem to be the principal objects and actions of the persons calling themselves *Threshers*. That there exists in Ireland some general pre-disposing cause for such disorders cannot be questioned, when it is recollected that similar instances have been repeated with little variation of circumstances, and with short intervals of time, for nearly half a century. No history, even of the perverseness of mankind, presents such a lengthened series of turbulence without assigning some cause external to the natural restlessness of the human mind. But on this general and pre-disposing cause I

mean to postpone the enquiry. At present the pressure of circumstances calls for a more immediate attention to the proximate causes which are at this moment in operation. These seem to be—1st. The State of the Rents of Lands and the conduct of Landlords.—2d. The State of Tithes, and conduct of the Clergy. As to the first, it must be observed, that the present *dispute* exists in a part of the kingdom which is destitute of trade and manufactures. Land is therefore the *only* source of subsistence. Where the territorial extent is small, and the proprietaryships comparatively large, Land (the *only* source of subsistence) being in the power of a few, becomes necessarily a *monopoly*. When the grasp of monopoly, pressed more close by the need of extravagance is wrought into a *habit* by the continual and almost justifiable efforts to *raise* the rents of lands that they may keep pace with the *depreciation* of money occasioned by an overloaded paper currency and an accumulating torrent of taxes, no room is left for a sense of mercy of justice or even of common policy. All is crushed by the pressure of the moment. Hence the cordial family habit existing between the hereditary landlord, and the permanent tenant; and indeed every other connexion except the tenant being considered as a mere machine of gain; as a mill by which the landlord may *grind* so much money out of so much land, has long since been destroyed. Farms, as if they were hogsheads of tobacco, and the landlord a foreign importer of foreign commodities, in haste to *clear outwards*, with the produce of his *venture*, are set up to *auction*: but not to public auction, where the competitors and the extent of their offers are known. The bidders and their offers are kept secret: and if the most remote adventurer (a character abounding in these times of agricultural speculation) shall bid threepence an acre more than the tenant whose family had rooted had blossomed and had borne good fruit for centuries on the same spot; the latter, with his lamenting train of wife and children, are sent—

"The world is all before them where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."

But the landlord has an expensive journey to attend the meeting of parliament in another country; and his lady must pay the rent of her opera box. Such dealing between landlord and tenant can produce no reciprocal kindness. And if the nature of the untaught human mind be attended to, it will be found that it is destitute of any philosophic conductor by which the passions can keep themselves in equilibrium:—that such minds are filled with some sort of electric

matter, and if the attractive power of affection be once dissipated, each party becomes negatively charged, and the *repulsion* is mutual and complete. The landlord hates the tenant whom he has wronged, and the tenant hates the landlord by whom he has been wronged. The hatred excited against a particular landlord is easily extended to his class. Hence they are all considered as monopolists and oppressors. Other matters have aggravated this sense of injury. 1st. Difference of religion. This source of unhappiness time and intercourse had considerably weakened in its effects, until some part of Mr. Pitt's administration, at one period conceived the plan of rendering the government of Ireland a matter of less practical difficulty than it had been. The *unanimity* of its inhabitants was thought to have given too much weight to their interests. This burthensome weight arising from internal concord might be diminished it was said by the excitation of domestic dissension. The plan was adopted. The success has been dreadful—2d. The Act of Union. At the time of passing this act, many persons, not limiting themselves to the ordinary field of opposition, industriously circulated grave *opinions*, that this act was a nullity in itself, and that the people were not bound to obey it. Some of these men, it is said, have since found employment and authority under it. But then urserly of opinions which they had sowed and cultivated they have not been successful in extirpating. The plants are carefully watered and fenced by other hands. The practical execution of this act has increased the number of *absentees* which was before an evil of great magnitude, and it has aggravated instead of diminished the *national* distinction, before too powerful. It is not in the strength of all the acts of parliament from Henry 2d, to the Act of Union inclusive, to induce the head and heart of an Irish peasant into a belief that an *Englishman* is not a *foreigner*. The memory of former broils is delivered down with an inveterate precision in the traditions of a rude people. The application of the term *foreigner* to an Englishman is not made by an Irish peasant with the mildest meaning of which the word is capable. And since the Act of Union a member of the parliament of England is universally classed as an *Englishman*; and meets in the misguided mind of the gross inhabitant, the hatred arising from being felt as a domestic oppressor, united to the antipathy of being considered as a foreign usurper. The families of the peasants expelled from their homes by the *mercantile* system of *auction* furnish recruits for two classes of persons; the one disgrace-

ful, the other dangerous to the state. The women and infants add to the beggars that swarm on the lands. The fathers and their adult sons recruit the white boys, defenders and Threshers, who ravage it. The peasantry of Ireland have something of the habits of the ancient Germans described by Tacitus: "*Feminis lugere honestum est; viris meminisse.*"—The second proximate cause which I mentioned was the State of Tithes and the conduct of the Clergy. Originally this cause of discontent was foolishly and wickedly fomented by the landlords themselves. They found that for such lands as were tithe free they got a higher rent than for those which were subject to tithe: and they, with the usual sagacity of short sighted avarice, thought that if tithes could be abolished the entire value would center in their own pockets. They now find themselves involved in the general ruin to which an encouragement of any particular *lawless* opposition always tends. To these general causes some particular circumstances have added a momentary quickness of fermentation. The landing of a French force under General Humbert diminished in that part of the kingdom the number of resident clergy. The parsons ran away as they were in duty bound to do, and most of them have forgotten to return. The tithes have been demised by the absentee incumbents to persons who necessarily wish to make the most of their bargains. For this purpose a *new* method has been devised. The farmer is no longer permitted to agree for or compound for his own tithes. All is performed by the Custom-house system of auction. At each harvest the farmers of a particular district are assembled at the Alehouse. The tithes of each farm are separately set up. Three bidders are required; of whom the farmer of the particular farm the tithes of which are set up must *not* be one. As each man bids, he is supplied with a glass of whiskey. The whiskey operates upon the bidding. If one farmer thinks his own tithes have been raised too high by a neighbour's bidding his heated mind concludes it can retaliate by raising in his own bidding the tithes of that neighbour. Thus the *whole* is raised by these simple and heated self destroyers of their own property to an exorbitant value. At the close of the auction, each purchaser is obliged to give a promissory note for the amount of his bargain. When the notes become due (the tithe contractor having generally a son or a brother an attorney) they are forthwith put into suit, by the summary process called in Ireland *civil bill*. The proceedings are rapid, and as many executions are commonly

issued as promissory notes have been given. The farmer in the end pays, by the sale of his goods, the amount of his note to the tithe contractor, the law costs to his son the attorney, and the execution fees to his cousin the under sheriff. Ruin ensues to many. They become beggars and consequently outcasts; for here are no poor laws. It may be perceived that such circumstances must tend to irritate three classes of men; the Clergy, the Gentry, and the Farmers very much against each other. But there are besides now operating, some political causes, which have assisted to blow these smouldering materials into a flame. It has been deemed necessary to fit out military expeditions against foreign settlements. How the possession of Buenos Ayres may enable you to pay the income tax in England, or enable us to pay the road assessments in Ireland, or repel the French if they should come from Brest, I cannot tell; but I suppose the Lord of Howick knows. In order to provide troops for these foreign expeditions, the regiments of the line in Ireland have been drafted, so as to leave many of them little else than skeletons. This has weakened the force of government. It cannot be supposed that persons who may find it their interest to embroil a weakened government by inflaming popular discontent, would overlook so apt a time. To such views alone can the appearance of persons travelling through the country of Ireland and holding private meetings with the rude and retired inhabitants be attributed. These men harangue their auditors, and distribute written papers among them. Their measures, like those of the ancient Germans are always twice canvassed: once when drunk that every man's feelings may be fully opened; and once when sober that every man's judgment may be clearly exercised. Money is said not to be wanting: but it is used with caution and from a very obvious policy an appearance of poverty carefully preserved. Here rests the first part of the information which I have received. I cannot close it however without observing, that in contemplating similar instances which have formerly occurred, it would seem as if the abuses of a profligate minister, and the exertions of a popular agitator, are much more nearly allied than is generally imagined. I am inclined to believe that the ministerial existence of George Grenville and Mr. Pitt was the immediate ancestor of Tom Paine and Arthur O'Connor. The terror at the offspring is no evidence against the reality of the descent. Sin shrunk from death.

“but he my inbred enemy,
“Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
“Made to destroy: I fled and called out death.”

It is I am told the *private* knowledge of these artificial and probably foreign efforts to inflame the people of Ireland, which has induced the printer of the speech in the name of Lord Henry Petty to aim at stopping all discussion of the subject. There are some men whose minds are so formed as to incline them to seek their safety not only by concealing public danger from public knowledge, but even to endeavour at stifling their own consciousness. Opium is said to give courage—a happy oblivion till the moment of intoxicated desperation. But if the desire to stop inquiry on the one side be coupled with the suggestion on the other of an “*extraordinary exertion of the law*” and an “*enlargement of the executive power*”—that is, in plain English an immediate application of the gallows and the bayonet to the irritated and deluded offenders, one can scarcely conceive a policy wherein a shallow understanding, and a cruel temper can exist in more intimate combination. Such are the measures of newspaper politicians. It reminds me of the decision of Colonel O'Blunder who ordered the soldiers charged with a mutiny to be shot first, and afterwards held a court martial on the charge. The proceedings of the Colonel was only an “*extraordinary exertion of the law*” and “*an enlargement of the executive power.*” Having heard so much of one party, not much to the advantage of another, and wishing to get a thorough knowledge of facts, I applied to a gentleman of credit who resides in this western part of the kingdom, and who from being much employed by many absentee landlords and members of the English parliament, was likely to be well acquainted with their conduct and affairs. He admitted, that such reports had been circulated, and such efforts had been made as I have already mentioned, and that they certainly had raised a very considerable *dispute*. But at the same time he assured me, that every word of the stories which I had heard respecting the conduct of the landlords was a most villainous calumny and that they were without exception the most benevolent and honourable men that existed. He said that they certainly had adopted a sort of auction in selling their lands, by advertising to receive proposals (sealed up and kept secret) for a rent by the acre: but that they did so, in order to avoid the slightest appearance of partiality, and were entirely actuated by a pure principle of *universal* benevolence: it was true that they did always prefer the

highest bidder; a criterion which they were led to adopt, not from any motive of paltry gain (which was an object infinitely below their *generous* minds) but because it was a criterion of all others the most easy to be ascertained. He said, that if any tenants whose families had lived upon their farms for centuries (before such modes were adopted by their landlords) were turned out, it was entirely their own fault; as they might have taken care that no person should outbid them. He said that the landlords and members of parliament were so careful to avoid being a burden on their tenants that many of them had, and all the rest were striving to get places and pensions, in order that the whole weight of their expences might not fall upon their lands: and in order still further to release their tenants from the burden of the expense, instead of returning to their own estates, and entertaining a train of consuming servants and relations, they now constantly reside during the summer at watering villages in England*, to the great grief of their wives and daughters, who "*doted of all things on a life of pastoral obscurity in their own country.*" He said that even if they were not warranted by law in what they did, yet their peculiar situation ought to extenuate much. They had been sent by the Act of Union into another country, at a great distance, to meet their equals in rank, but much their superiors in wealth. To appear in a strange country, in the same stile as your equal, was an ambition not very likely to be resisted by an Irish gentleman. At this period the immense issue of paper currency had greatly

* The assertion above must be taken with some limitation. Most of them come to Ireland twice a year for about a fortnight to the assizes. In Ireland, there is a sum of about £500,000. per annum distributed at the assizes, under the name of presentments. There are 64 county members. The grand juries vote, raise, and distribute the money. The grand juries are struck by the sheriff—the sheriff is named by the crown, *probably* on the *recommendation* of the member, who may be the *friend* of the minister. The member is a *friend* of the minister. The sheriff is a *friend* of the member. The grand jury are all *friends* of the sheriff. All is a *friendly* proceeding. The *friendly* member attends at the *distribution*. The whole history of this annual sum of £500,000, and its effects shall be detailed at a future opportunity. What a cargo of independence England imported from Ireland by the Union! One sixty-fourth part of £500,000, is above £7,500.

diminished the value of money, and the bank statutes stopping the currency of gold, had aggravated their situation by adding sometimes a charge of 15 or 16 per cent. on their remittances. These circumstances forced them to raise their rents by every means in their power. He said the paper currency was the curse of the country, and that the abhorrence of it had been much increased in the western districts ever since the landing of the French under General Humbert, who (probably, from policy) had taken care to pay, in *dollars*, for every thing he got. After this, he said, it was impossible to convince the country people, particularly at Castle-bar, that a man who paid for his provisions punctually in "*hard silver dollars*" was not a better customer, than he, who in his hurry to get away, forgot to pay at all, or if he did recollect it, paid in Green Grocers sixpenny bank notes. I asked him, if this paper currency was thought to be such a curse to the country, why his friends the members of parliament did not put an end to it? He answered, that as Lord Grenville was minister, and as the paper circulation had been a measure of that "*illustrious statesman and his ever to be lamented friend Mr. Pitt*" it was not likely that they would think it *prudent*, "*under existing circumstances,*" to vote in parliament for its abolition. After having thus obtained what I have stated from my friend, the friend of the landlords, I next applied to the parson of the parish, who fortunately had arrived the week before from Bath; in order to make a new lease of his tithes. From him, I learned, that the whole cause of the present disturbance, had originated in the cruelty and avarice of absentee landlords, who, not content with exacting the utmost penny for their lands, were grasping at the tithes themselves, and irritating the whole country to rise against the poor clergy—that he himself got very little from his rectory—so little, that with paying the Income Tax in England, and the price of Exchange on remittances from Ireland, he could not lay by much, though he had *three* livings. He said, he would take an opportunity of explaining this matter to me when he should return next year which he intended to do and remain a *full fortnight*: but that at present he was under a necessity of setting out immediately for Bath, in order to be present at the monthly meeting of the *Amateur Harmonic Society* where he was to have the *honour of presiding at the piano-forte*.—As I had heard so much from two parties to this question, I own I had a little curiosity to hear something from the third. There was a poor neighbour of mine for whom I had

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once the good fortune of being able to do some acts of kindness. This man I had reason to suspect was not a little engaged among the *Threshers* in the *dispute*; and I thought his gratitude would induce him to trust me. Accordingly I made my enquiry in the most soothing manner I was able. The poor man went, indeed, in his confidence, beyond my expectations. He appeared so exasperated by his sufferings, that he hardly seemed conscious he was disclosing what the lawyers would certainly call rebellion, though in our idiom ever since the mild government of Lord Hardwicke it has been called only *dispute*. But the tale he told me is not to be written: not on account of the crimes it might have confessed, but on account of the causes he assigned in extenuation. By the narration of miseries which I found these wretches had endured and were likely to endure, my "*individual feelings were so wounded*" that I am certain to repeat them would "*wound the feelings of very great people*;" and as I understand that now by the law of England so to do would be a very great crime, and would probably expose me to be transported to England and laid down within the stroke of a much more powerful *Thresher* than any of those amongst whom I now live, I must guard myself in silence. Whether the provocations, which my poor neighbour assured me had excited the *dispute* were truly assigned or not, it is not for me to determine. But as a *dispute* exists, in which many thousand men in arms have been engaged, I was anxious to know if any step had been taken for its suppression or accommodation. For this purpose, I applied to some gentlemen of consequence who happened at that moment to be in the country. They would not give me any information—they said that as soon as they arrived in London they would ask Sir John Newport. I then thought the exciseman of the district must be the best source of intelligence on the subject; because as he never omits upon any occasion to declare that he is one of the "*friends of government*," it was natural to conclude, that he knew what was going on in so friendly a connexion. Nor was I mistaken. My friend the exciseman assured me that every measure which the most consummate wisdom could suggest to the most unremitting activity had been put in execution: and that the most effectual military as well as the most dignified civil methods had been adopted for suppressing the present daring and extensive *dispute*. As an instance of military care, he assured me, as soon as it appeared, that the *dispute* had become serious, a proclamation for the purpose of filling up the skeleton re-

giments had been issued, printed in very large letters, inviting all sober Irishmen to enlist; specifying to them the singular advantages to be attained thereby; and that the more effectually to explain the said singular advantages, the proclamation had been translated into the *Irish* language, printed accordingly, and pasted up on every old wall post and gate within that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland. He said, it had been indeed unlucky for the effect of this proclamation, (as what wisdom has been able to controul *existing circumstances*) that although the *Irish* language be still *spoken* by some millions of the inhabitants of Ireland, yet in the whole island there were not above ten or a dozen people who could *read* it when written or printed: and that they were speculative and recluse scholars; men of all others the least likely to enlist: and that an additional circumstance of ill luck had occurred, which was, that not having been able to procure types of the *Irish* characters or letters, (no book having been printed in that language since the reign of Ollim Fodlagh who lived in the year 3014 of the Julian period and in the 17th century before the Christian æra) the *Irish* words in the proclamation had been printed in the *Roman* characters: a circumstance which had very much puzzled the antiquaries who had been led by their love of curiosities, to inspect the posts and old walls on which the proclamation was exhibited. In the effect of this measure therefore some disappointment had occurred. But true wisdom readily supplies expedients. The goods which could not be manufactured at home, might be imported from abroad; and accordingly ten or twelve thousand ready made troops have been since transported from England into this country; which in addition to the *Germans*, &c. already here my friend the exciseman made no doubt would very much conciliate the affections of the *Irish*. In respect of civil measures, he said, great exertions had been made. To smother the *dispute* effectually or crush it at once, a special commission had been issued for the purpose of hanging these *Threshers* according to the statute in that case made and provided: and not only to give the measure such a degree of ponderousness as would enable it to keep down this yeasty effervescence in the people, had my Lord Chief Justice himself, who was undoubtedly a personage of the greatest weight on the bench, been sent out: but it also appeared, (as might be seen in a composition of much brilliancy, the address of the Grand Jury of the County of Mayo) that the councils in Dublin had actually been deprived for some short time of the benefit of

the wisdom and the support of the virtue of the Attorney General who was sent out also to add, his consistency and influence to enforce a due obedience to the law. These circumstances, the exciseman said were of infinite importance, not only in respect of the event of the particular trials, but in respect of views of general policy. They marked strongly the almost irresistible effect of the penetrating and searching influence which might be used; by which it was highly probable the peasantry of Ireland would be effectually cured of two troublesome if not dangerous propensities—those of having any confidence in each other, or any reliance on the ministers of their religion. The exciseman said that when the Irish peasantry were thoroughly taught by experience, that they could not have the least reliance upon the bonds of parental, filial, or fraternal affection; that when they were so far cured of their present bigotry, as to despise and hate the ministers of that great branch of the Christian religion in which they had been bred, by being shewn that although confession might obtain for them absolution for the world to come, it would undoubtedly consign them to the hangman in the world that is;—he had, he said, no doubt but with an entire repeal of the habeas corpus act, a due execution of the statutes for martial law, and the assistance of sixty thousand regular troops, Ireland would become a valuable dependence to England, and produce so considerable a revenue, as to be able with the aid of Sir John Newport, in borrowing two or three millions a year, very nearly to pay the troops to keep the peace, the custom-house officers to collect the revenue, and the salaries and pensions of the “friends of government.” It was obvious therefore, my friend the exciseman said, that no exertions had been wanting to keep the Irish to the path in which dutiful and obedient subjects ought to tread. Here ended the exciseman: and from his account I am inclined to think that the maker of the speech for Mr. Perceval need not be apprehensive that his system of political reformation is at all despised in this country. If I should venture in my own private opinion to entertain any doubts of the ultimate wisdom of such measures, I am far from attempting to censure those who suggest them, or those who execute them. They *good men!* surely act to the *best of their knowledge*. I confess, however, that I do entertain some doubts, as I have said, of the ultimate wisdom and efficacy of such measures. I re-

collect that Montesquieu speaks contemptuously of that system whether civil or religious “*qui arretoit la main et abandonnoit le cœur.*” A cotemporary and countryman of his, observes—“*Dès que les Empe-reurs n’eurent plus que des SOLDATS pour confidens, ils n’eurent plus que des ENNE-MIS pour sujets.*” These however suggest but doubts. A private man can view such a subject but in part. A general good may justify a particular wrong. My telescope may want a sufficiency of field to enable me to sweep the whole of the political heavens. That power belongs only to the awful magnitude of official vision. But, I must observe that the tranquillity and wealth of the ministry are not always the tranquillity and wealth of the people. My Lord Buckinghamshire draws up about £11,400 per annum from the public funds of Ireland: my Lord Liverpool 4,000l. per annum: my Lord Wellesley, about 5,000l. per annum: and, my Lord Redesdale, 4,000l. per annum. These great incomes, together with the exhausting list in which they stand, no doubt contribute much to the wealth and tranquillity of those who receive them; as well as to the tranquillity though perhaps not directly to the wealth of those who gave them. But as to the wealth and tranquillity of those who *pay* them, I cannot find that one acre of land in Ireland ever produced one potatoe more from all the services the whole tribe ever performed; nor that one inhabitant in Ireland ever slept in security, one hour longer on account of all the wealth and tranquillity these splendid placemen enjoys. Nor have all their wealth and tranquillity, and I might add even their wisdom too, yet convinced me, that the alternative of the sword of the law, or the law of the sword, involves the whole arcana of good government: nor that the surest foundation on which to build the edifice of public justice, can be a resort to the private treachery of an informer: nor that insinuations propagated of the corruptibility of the priesthood can be the sounder preservation of the morality of the people. From the wealth, the wisdom and the tranquillity of such profound sources, I have yet to learn, how laws, practices, and habits, that render effete the cement which should bind the proprietaries to the population of a country, and which not only render that cement effete but reverse its qualities and change it to a repellent force between the component parts of the social order, can contribute to union of a state.—W. A.